

## Interview with Eugene Rosenfeld

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EUGENE ROSENFELD

Interviewed by: Jack O'Brien

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*Q: My name is Jack O'Brien. I am going to interview an old friend and colleague, Gene Rosenfeld, who has had a very interesting career and who will begin by telling us how he got started in government. Gene?*

BEGINNINGS IN U.S. GOVERNMENT: 1940-CENSUS BUREAU

ROSENFELD: Jack, this goes way back, I think to, gosh, 1940. I had taken some government exam, I think it was an FBI fingerprint thing, one of those intelligence tests, and I naturally ended up very high on the list. I was offered a job eventually to come to Washington, which turned out to be working with the Census Bureau. That was a very menial job, really, packing boxes with census forms. Ultimately I became a "decoder" and when they got the files back, the files that I had been sending out to the field with twenty-seven other guys, they finally got filled out in the field and then they came back and we had to see what the results were and mark them out. This was an enormous and extremely efficient statistical organization, one of the best in the world, I believe, at that time. I learned a lot about the workings of government. It was very well disciplined, very well organized. Time checks came in at 8:00 a.m. and you got 10 minutes off at 11 o'clock

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or whatever it was. It was pretty much of a factory, a sharp difference from the experience that I had had during the previous 3-4 years in the New York area as a stringer reporter, or working various odd jobs, as well as playing the piano when our band could get hired. Incidentally, my first overseas experience was taking this band on an ocean-liner cruise to North Africa and Italy in 1938. The experience at Census was new and interesting but not very productive in terms of what I'd hoped to do in civil service. Here I was in an organization that was efficient but mechanical in doing what it had to do. I continued to do that unstimulating job for a year, but I did learn how people worked together, sitting at long desks, checking through large folios, reporting to superior officers, getting a paycheck every two weeks. And there were a lot of very bright guys, also from New York, and also happy to have even this kind of a job. Many of them went on to high government positions. After the census was over, I was "terminated" in early 1941. The job was over. I decided to hang around Washington to see what I could get. I picked up a job about a week later with one of the new defense agencies, as they were called, because the war clouds were, as they say, on the horizon. I decided that I would take whatever I could. This turned out to be a job cutting stencils in the basement of the Social Security building. That went on for several months until I was "discovered" by one of the guys upstairs, who found out that I had a journalism background.

1941: OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT(LATER CALLED OWI) NEWSROOM

*Q: What was the name of that organization?*

ROSENFELD: That was the Office for Emergency Management. As I recall, it was a catch-all, sort of a clearinghouse kind of thing that a number of these newer, just organized agencies were pulled in under. The Coordinator for Information, the Office of Facts and Figures, other, regulatory, groups like the Office of Price Administration and the War Production Board. Some of that stuff at that time was all being pulled in together in early 1941. This OEM, the Office of Emergency Management, had a newsroom where all the press releases announcing various regulations, were being put out — statements, all the

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things that the government was doing to mobilize the country at that time. These were the things I was cutting stencils for. So I was, as I say, asked to come upstairs, to come out of the basement, and help organize and run the newsroom, of what eventually became the Office of War Information, distributing press releases, talking to people. It was a step up and it was fun. It was something I really enjoyed and I got to meet an awful lot of very good newspapermen, like Joe Laitin, Charlie Egan (NY Times), and Al Friendly, there were just dozens of guys who were covering this thing. Some, later journalistic aces, were cub reporters at this time.

### "ZOOT SUIT" ARTICLE LEADS TO REGULAR WRITING JOB

I kept doing that until finally I managed to move into a writing job on the strength of an article that I had written dealing with zoot suits. They had put out a regulation about zoot suits saying that you could not use more than so much yardage to make a suit. Zoot suits were real disallowed because they used a lot of fabric. Anyway, one of the other guys, an old feature writer from the N.Y. World Telegram, wrote it and I thought it was not very good, and so my boss, George McMillan, who had previously worked on the Times-Herald here, suggested I try to do better. So I knocked one out in about 20 minutes and it got everybody's attention. It was pretty funny and it was printed all over the place and so I became a minor attention getter for a while. That continued and I did more feature and editing. I worked Leo Pinkus who ran the news desk. There were a lot of other around who were excellent writers — Phil Hamburger, Edith Iglauer, Barbara Tuchman, Charles Olson the poet, Alan Cranston (now Senator), Dan Lang, most of whom later went to the New Yorker. These were just some of the talented people who were really coming down to Washington to help out because they had talent and they could be used. So I learned a lot about how you write, how you did things, how you edit, how you put things in place, in a government context. That went on until the opportunity came for me to go overseas. I had gotten married, and then Chris. ...

*Q: Could you explain who Chris is?*

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ROSENFELD: Chris Prouty Rosenfeld, now a well-published author and writer on Ethiopia, is my wife.

*Q: This would be what year?*

ROSENFELD: I met Chris in 1943. We courted, as they say, for about eight months, got married in April of 1944.

### 1944: OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT IN OWI OPERATION AT SHAEF, LONDON

Just before that I had gone up to New York to be interviewed for an overseas job. I had been drafted and rejected as 4-F because of my eyes. I had attempted to get an Army commission as a censor or something because I had some French, to go over to North Africa. I was rejected on that, too. So I figured the only way I was going to get some next-to-the-action kind of thing was to get into overseas OWI operations. Young guys were pretty patriotic in those days. When I went up to New York and was interviewed they said, "Okay, with your background and whatever, we can send you over to be a writer-editor in the Allied Press Service operation." That was in London as part of SHAEF, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, the Eisenhower headquarters, psychological warfare. We produced copies for military and civilian broadcasts, leaflets, etc. In London there were a lot of very exciting times, obviously — the buzz bombs, for one thing and the other — meeting a lot of very special people. I actually met Ed Murrow there once when I was covering a press conference at Ambassador Winant's office at the embassy. Murrow was there and we met and talked briefly. I recalled this to him some twenty-odd years later; he did not remember it, of course, because he had met a lot of people, but there was a connection. Anyway, after this London assignment, which went on until the end of 1945, when I was supposed to close down the office — most of the people had gone on to the continent, the occupation of Germany, Radio Luxembourg, some of the other establishments that had been set up after the European war was over — you know, the Vienna Kurier Neue Auslese and all of these other publications that had been set up in

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occupied areas, and a number of the people I still know to this day were in that batch that went over.

1945: ROSENFELD CLOSES OWI LONDON OFFICE-ASSISTS AT FIRST MEETING OF UN IN LONDON, RETURNS TO U.S., AND (1946) IS ASSIGNED TO ASSIST IN SETTING UP U.S. MISSION TO UN IN NEW YORK

Anyway, I had to close up the office at the end of 1945. I was asked to stay on to help out with the U.S. delegation to the UN. They were having their first meeting in London at Church House in January of 1946. The UN had been set up six or seven months earlier in San Francisco, as you may remember. This first session went on for two or three weeks in London. I helped out on a variety of things, getting things organized, writing reports, doing public relations for what was then called a public liaison branch of State Department. After that was over, Chris and I — Chris had joined me; had come over in September of 1945. She managed to be, I think, the first OWI wife to make it across and so we were together in London for three or four months. It was rough, it was cold, it was rationed, and it was wonderful. We finally had to go back. We went back to Washington, where I was told I would be terminated without prejudice, but before the termination could take place they asked me if I could help out in setting up U.S. mission to the UN up in New York. The UN was up out at Lake Success but the U.S. Mission was on Park Avenue and they wanted me to help set up a reports section, which would report daily to the State Department. So two or three other guys and I covered every meeting that went on at the UN, writing reports, sending them back by Telex to Washington. This was a tough job, lots of pressure, with few precedents. It went on for — they said three months and it turned out to be five years. I finally decided that the boredom of the job, the difficulty of it, the fact that it was nothing but Cold War haranguing day after day after day made me feel that this was not really what I wanted in government service.

1951: LEAVES U.S./UN, OBTAINS ASSIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL PRESS SERVICE (IPS) OF IIE (PREDECESSOR TO USIA)

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I liked public service and I thought it should offer something better than this, so some of the guys that I had worked with in London were down in Washington working for a branch of the State Department that I think was then called IIE, one of those initial outfits, but it had to do with preparing materials for dispatch overseas to the embassies — news files, features, some publications and other things of that nature. So I went down there and I talked to people and they said, “Hey, yeah, we can use you.” So I got a job with what ultimately became IPS, the press service.

1956: OVERSEAS FOR USIA AS INFORMATION OFFICER USIS, NEW DELHI

I stayed with that through a variety of different assignments. That went on for five years. At one point I became the chief commentator for the press service and the head of the columns section; four or five of us writing these columns on cultural affairs, economics, domestic activity, foreign policy, sovietology. I would take a crack at each one of these things, but specialized in foreign affairs. Each one was sort of a specialist. It gave me a much broader look at the kind of thing that could be provided to the field — at least I was told it was the kind of thing that the field needed to have if they wanted to present American ideas and attitudes and conditions to people overseas in various countries and various civilizations and societies. I found that a pretty exciting and rewarding kind of thing, but, again, it went on for about five years. There were other things I did in between, covering international conferences helping on publications and stuff of that nature. Finally I decided to make the break and get into the Foreign Service. We had had a good taste of it in London. We knew that there were other things to do and there were more exotic places, perhaps, around the world that might be available. I talked to Personnel and they had a couple of things. They had something in Japan, something in Paris.

*Q: This was what year, Gene?*

ROSENFELD: This was in 1956. I had been — as I say, I had come to Washington in 1951 from New York. After five years, in 1956, I decided we ought to take a shot at

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overseas, which we did. I was offered the job of Chief Information Officer in India — New Delhi — I was delighted and so was Chris.

### EARLY DIFFICULTIES IN DELHI: INADEQUATE DIRECTION

By this time we had four children which I think caused some people to say, “Hey, you can't take four kids to India at this stage of the game.” We said, “Well, we will worry about that. We think we can do it,” and we did. We went off in, I guess it was, April of 1956. We arrived in New Delhi. It was 118 degrees at the airport. Every one of us was sick except me. Fortunately, Abe Rosenthal, the NY Times correspondent, who was an old friend from UN days, and his wife Ann, were at the airport to meet us — we had told them we were coming. They had provided an ayah and a bearer and a car, so we all — there was somebody from USIS there with me — went off to hotel that was less than acceptable. I will not give the name of the administrative officer who did this. When I complained about the cramped, non-air-conditioned quarters, he replied, “Well, I was just trying to save you some money.” He really meant his budget, because temporary housing could have provided for far better accommodations for a good period. At that time, in our condition, we were not interested in saving money. As a matter of fact, after about a week of it I was ready to pay our own way back. We were so sort of depressed and scrunched, but this is something for everybody to remember. Coming into a tough assignment — and I do not know if they are still as tough as that, maybe they are — you have got to stick it out, because this is the discipline of the Foreign Service, even having to attend or give a reception when it is 98 and you have got to stand up there for two hours shaking hands with people you do not know and you probably will never meet again. That is important to do. It is a discipline that helps keep you straight. Anyway, the Indian assignment began to shape up pretty quickly. I was supposed to replace Bill King, who was the Chief Information Officer, and there was about a two-week overlap, of which Bill graciously gave me fifteen minutes to tell me what to worry about. He didn't really tell me even that. He just told me what a lousy place it was and what I ought to watch out for, but not anything to do with the job. It was not a very — it did not look to me like a very happy post, although the

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PAO was a very good guy but he had his own approach to things, which was very relaxed and not really very directional in terms of the people who were working for him — but a lovely guy, anyway. I guess I learned something from him, which is: be relaxed. After three months I went to him and I said, “Tom, for God's sake, what am I supposed to do here? I am under three feet of water and I do not know where to go. I have eight Americans responsible to me. I have a budget of about \$10 million and five hundred Indian employees scattered all over the place. I don't know what the hell is going on.” He said, “You are doing terrific, Gene. Hang in there.” I said, “Come on, Tom, tell me, where am I going wrong?” He said, “Oh, no, that's okay. You're doing okay.” As I said, a lovely guy, but no help at all. PAOs have to lead. The deputy — he may have read a newspaper at one time but he didn't really know very much about information at all. Decades before, a missionary social worker in Bombay where his main job was to try to convert the prostitutes into the straight and narrow, but he was a decent guy who eschewed all forms of liquor, so when he had a representation thing he would provide rather weak orange juice. People who were there at that time will know whom I am talking about. It should be something that we should remember, that the Agency should remember, in sending somebody out. I don't suppose it is a problem anymore, but this business of overlap should be taken seriously. If somebody is going out to a new post, especially a young or uninitiated officer, he ought to have sufficient time with the incumbent and that the incumbent ought to be under strict orders, no matter how difficult, how much he wants to get out of there and how difficult it is to get things packed and all the rest of it, that he must have to devote a significant amount of his overlap time to getting his successor on track.

### EMBASSY HAD NO IDEA HOW TO DEAL WITH PRESS-SEEMED INTENT ON KEEPING ANY INFORMATION FROM PRESS REPRESENTATIVES

One of the things I discovered pretty quickly in India was that the political office and the embassy were absolutely stupid when it came to dealing with the press. Abe Rosenthal and Jimmy Greenfield, who was there for Time, took me aside pretty quickly and said, “You had better do something about these guys. They haven't got a clue. They don't

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know what is going on. If they do, they are not going to tell us anything. We simply cannot have any kind of feeling for what they are trying to do if they treat us like we are a bunch of spies." So I felt that this was very, very important to do and I began to try to educate political officers. Maybe this is something that still needs to be done. I have a feeling that political officers are a little bit more sophisticated about this now, don't you, Jack?

*Q: Yes, yes, indeed.*

ROSENFELD: At that time after setting up an interview, you would bring a newspaper man in and the officer would be sitting at his desk reading a telegram, and as soon as we walk in he takes the telegram and puts it in a drawer, turning it over, hiding it from sight, which is not exactly a good psychological beginning for a discussion on important political matters. John Sherman Cooper was ambassador when I arrived, but he was not in India at that time except for about three days to say goodbye. He was back in Kentucky running for the Senate. There was a career officer in charge who really did not have any feeling at all for press relations even though he had to run this embassy at a difficult time. We were in bad shape there because of the Dulles "arms aid to Pakistan" policy, so we were on a rocky road.

### NEWLY ARRIVING AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER CORRECTS EMBASSY PRESS RELATIONS

Ellsworth Bunker came in early 1957 and was very forthcoming with me. He asked me what I wanted him to do and I told him. I said, "I think you ought to get together with the American press at least once a week and once a month with the Indian press. You can have it off-the-record if you want, but you should have it a very outgoing relaxed thing, because, frankly, you are going to learn more from them than they are from you. You are going to be able to ask them questions about what's going on because they are out on the street, they are talking to people, they are talking to cabinet ministers, they are traveling up and down the country and they are going to give you a lot more information than you

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may be from your own political officers in certain areas. I am not running down the political office, I am just saying this is an additional dimension for you to get.”He agreed, said it was a good idea. So we established what became an institution. Every Wednesday the guys came in. Now, this turned out to be very good except one time.

### ANECDOTE: AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S SERIAL USE OF ELECTION STORY

This is one of those stories you can either use or throw away. It is a story that I remember because it was important to me. It was — let's see, in the U.S., 1958 was an off year, so the newsmen wanted to get the Ambassador's feeling on the congressional race. They asked, “How do you think it is going to go? Do you think the Democrats are going to get a majority or the Republicans, or whatever?” He said, “I don't know. I can't really tell. All I know is that I try to keep my host country informed of as much as I know.”He continued, “I remember when I was ambassador to Italy and Mr. De Gasperi, the prime minister, called me in and wanted to know what was going to happen at the time of the 1952 election. This was when Taft and Eisenhower were competing for the Republican nomination.”He knew that Eisenhower was pro-Europe and Taft had been making a lot of strong statements about cutting off aid. So De Gasperi asked me, 'What is going to happen?' Bunker continued, I just told him, don't worry about it. No matter who wins, the policy has been set. Aid to Europe, especially to Italy, will continue because of the political factors that exist in the United States today.”Then he said, “Fortunately my bluff wasn't called. Eisenhower was elected.”Everybody thought that was a good story and that was it. Next week one of the guys who had been out of town asked: “Mr. Ambassador, what do you think is going to happen in this upcoming election?” Bunker went through the same story again with the same group of guys. The following week, believe it or not, the same thing happened and he told the same story again. So the DCM looked at me and I looked at the DCM and he said, “You are going to have to try to tell him, Gene.” I said, “No, I'm not. You're his number two. You are going to have to tell him that he just can't tell that story anymore.”The following week he told it again! When I got back to my office there was a call for me from Pat Killen of the United Press. Pat said, “Gene, what was that wop's

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name?" I said, "Pat, go bleep yourself." That was the response of a tactful, diplomatic Foreign Service Information officer! Anyway, that was funny. What was not so funny was Arthur Goodfriend. You may remember Arthur Goodfriend.

### THE DISASTROUS MR. GOODFRIEND — AND HIS "MASSES"

*Q: Very well, yes.*

ROSENFELD: Arthur Goodfriend was a total disaster. He thought he was going to save the world and damned near destroyed us in the process. By then Ken Bunce was PAO. A finer guy and a more devoted and conscientious one never lived. He really worked hard and he knew what he was doing. He had been a history professor and when he had a USIS-India staff meeting he would take his watch out and put it on the table and he would proceed to talk for 55 minutes, at the end of which he would say, "Any questions?" All of us knew Ken and all of us loved him because he was such a decent guy. Then, here comes Arthur Goodfriend with his absolute knowledge that what he was going to tell was gospel, was the truth, was the necessity for this post to follow, that it was important for us to reach the masses. Now, in India at that time, the "masses" only ran somewhere about 450 million to 500 million people. We figured that we were going to have a hell of a lot of problems just reaching the "elite", because we figured they amounted to four or five million. Dr. Goodfriend was absolutely certain that he was going to turn everything around, make America the beautiful and beloved to the Indian masses. Of course, he was full of crap and created an enormous amount of tension in the sense that he was seeking to subvert people away from the program that we had conscientiously, devotedly — midnight oil — organized so that we all understood what our function was. Goodfriend wanted to throw all this out and concentrate on "reaching the masses."

### CIA — UNCOORDINATED WITH USIS — GETS INTO PRESS ACT

Anyhow, another thing that bothered me was my concern at CIA involvement with certain newspapers — bribes, peddling highly tendentious material, buying off newspapers —

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of course, without telling us anything about it. I mean, somebody in the USIS Delhi office would come up and say, "Hey, look at this story (in the Ambala Gazette or wherever), did you ever see this?" I looked at it and said no, I didn't think that was one of ours — a pretty good story, though, very anticommunist. But I suspected something unorthodox was going on. And I began to resent it. I was in a quandary. I could go to the station chief and say, "Hey, why don't you stop this stuff? It is not doing you any good. All it is is creating problems for us and it just makes it obvious." For one thing there was this venal but communist-leaning tabloid down at Bombay, a scandal sheet called Blitz that was throwing everything back at us, including Soviet disinformation, forgeries. But we were under orders; you don't talk to the CIA and you don't deal with the CIA. I discovered later that that is a lot of nonsense, but those were my orders at the time. This is something — I don't know what is happening now in the Agency. Jack, do you have any inside information as to whether the CIA has placed people with USIA?

*Q: I am not up to date with that, Gene, but certainly during my assignments overseas I felt complete freedom and liberty to discuss anything with any of the station chiefs that I have known. If I did have instructions on that matter I ignored them, frankly, because it was simply impossible to do business without exchanging notes from time to time, at least.*

ROSENFELD: That is not what I mean. I completely agree with that. If you came up against a situation where you think a CIA officer or station chief can give you some lead-ins on what is going on, so that you can do your job better, I see that as okay, but I remember there were specific caveats, don't let the CIA try to get you to do something for them. That was something that we had to be very careful about. On the other hand, I always felt that the less we had to do with the CIA the better. I mean, if we wanted to keep our virginity at least. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe I was being too naive about these things.

*Q: A basic rule — which I think might apply in the future as it has in my case in the past — is that it is not, repeat not, necessary for the PAO to know everything that the other side is*

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*doing, the other side of the embassy. It is very good at times to be able to say honestly, "I don't know."*

ROSENFELD: I agree. I think that is generally standard practice.

*Q: Normal curiosity sometimes leads people to say, "Well, I want to know more about it" even though it does not impinge on his own territory.*

ROSENFELD: Impinging on territory is what I am talking about. I think that is dirty pool. I don't think it helps anything. I don't think it won us any points anywhere.

### CIA HELPS TURN A YOUNG COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER REPORTER INTO A FRIEND OF AMERICA

Now, for instance, turning it around a little bit, I got a call from the reception/desk that there was a newspaperman here to see me, and the receptionist said, "He wants to see the head man." I said, "Well, you had better tell him to see — better check with Ken Bunce." After a minute or so she called back to say, "Mr. Bunce says since this man is a newspaperman I think you should see him." I said, "Fine, send him in." It turned out that this young man — let's call him Ram — was a reporter with the Communist Party paper and working in the Communist headquarters. He was unhappy because of several things. One of them was that a member of his family had been considered disloyal by the party and had been severely beaten up or even killed, as far as I can remember. To make up for this overdone discipline the party said, "All right, Ram. You have got your younger brother who is out there in one of the provinces. We will send him to school. We will send him to college," which they never did. The third thing that bothered Ram was that the editor of the paper had an air conditioner in his office, and that was not right for communists. Communists should be "of the people" and should suffer like the people, and he discovered that the editor was making more money than others on the paper, and that wasn't right, because everybody should make only fifty rupees a month, or whatever it was. So I said, "Look, for one thing, I think it is not very smart of you to come in here,

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walk in here, because if your party is being rough on you I think you should avoid being seen publicly coming into our office. "However, let me suggest something. Why don't you come around and have tea with me tonight at my place?" I gave him my address and he came over and he talked and talked in my air-conditioned bedroom, which he didn't seem to mind because after all, we were Americans. The other rooms were not air-conditioned! He told me several stories about what was going on in the Communist Party headquarters. It sounded legitimate to me; I said, "Well, look, I think that you deserve — that your brother deserves, to get some attention and go to school. I am going to see what I can do about getting him some help so that maybe you can feel better about that and feel better about us and that we can be trusted. We do not want anything from you but we think that you are a deserving fellow, so why don't you come around here again tomorrow night?" The following day I went to the CIA station chief and related the story and suggested that he pick it up from here. I didn't want to have any more to do with this. "This is over to you." Well, it turned out, as far as I could learn that this guy provided inside information of communist party activities from the headquarters for at least five years. It was a hell of a good walk-in. It was a great catch and I only did what I felt was needed. They did provide the guy's brother with tuition to go to college. I think we made a friend.

*Q: It was a bridge.*

ROSENFELD: This is the old story, evidence of effectiveness. How many Communist Party cards have you torn up today?

*Q: That is right.*

ROSENFELD: You can't prove that. But, it is the kind of thing that could happen in a place like India.

*Q: I am told you had a total of four-and-a-half years in India on that assignment.*

ROSENFELD: Yes.

A LAST REMINISCENCE ON INDIA — ED MURROW VISITS IN 1960

*Q: Your next job was where?*

ROSENFELD: One more India reminiscence. Ed Murrow came out to India. He was just on his sabbatical, you remember, in 1960. He had had a fight with CBS, with Bill Paley, and he had been in the Middle East and he showed up in India. I heard he was in town. I called him and told him who I was from USIS, and asked, "Is there anything we can do for you?" This is something I suppose that most people do. If they don't they ought to. This is something that, no matter who comes into town if he is a decent newspaperman he ought to be called up. He shouldn't have to wait to call us. We should have good intelligence, perhaps information from other newsmen or other parts about who is coming in, one way or another and call the guy and let him know. You make a lot of points that way. Anyway I asked Murrow if I could do anything, he said, "Yes, I want to talk to you." So he came over and he talked to us for about a good hour-and-a-half. Ken Bunce came in and said hello. Ken, being not too much at ease with newsmen, sort of backed off. I think he was working on the budget or something. John Lund was the deputy and he and I talked to Ed. At his request, we briefed him very fully about what was going on in India. That was a very important job for us. Then I asked him, "What about U.S. politics? What is going on back there?" He said, "I haven't been back there for months," but he made it clear he was a Stevenson man. I said, "Well, what about this guy Kennedy? He seems to be moving up pretty fast." He said, "Well, I'll tell you; last summer he called me up and wanted to talk to me, so I went up to Hyannis and we sat out in the back yard and killed a bottle — " mostly it was Ed killing the bottle, I think, but Jack didn't mind having a drink or two. He said, "I came away from there still — admittedly — I still think Adlai would be better, but I came away from there not really liking this guy because he seemed to be so sure of himself. He seemed to think that there wasn't anything he couldn't handle and there was nothing that he didn't have an answer for. So I am still hoping that Adlai will get the nod."

### 1960: BACK IN WASHINGTON AT IPS, MURROW BECOME DIRECTOR

End of story, until I get back to Washington later that year. The election is held. Kennedy is elected. Kennedy is naming people to the cabinet. He has not named anybody to head USIA yet. Finally, the last top appointment to be named, I think, was Ed Murrow. There had been other names that were being mentioned — Clayton Fritchey, Roger Tubby and various other names, but Kennedy was holding out for Murrow. Anyhow, one day at 1776 I got into the elevator and who walks in but Ed Murrow. He comes into the elevator and everybody stands at attention, naturally — the big man — and he was, he was a terrific guy and most impressive. He sees me and he says, “Hey, how are you? Why don't you come up and see me?” I said “Certainly” and I eventually went up to see him for a brief visit. Naturally, I didn't mention anything about our discussion in New Delhi. Some things should not be brought up. Now, I also had a problem in that when I was back in Washington, since there was the other stuff about India, which I have to get back to because of returning there in 1962 under Galbraith, but to keep the chronology: I was in Washington as chief of the European Branch of the Press Service, when I had a problem thrown in my lap, which was again a reprise of the Arthur Goodfriend headache.

### THE ARTHUR GOODFRIEND PROBLEM AGAIN

Goodfriend had written this book about India. He was not satisfied with being taken out of there because he had been such a disruptive influence. He had written this book called *The Twisted Image*, ostensibly a report of his stewardship there and he had marked it confidential and so forth and he had submitted it. Others had seen it, Ken Bunce had written some sort of brief rebuttal and it was brought to me. I said, “Well, what the hell do you want me to do about it? It doesn't matter, because while this guy may mark it 'confidential', and while he may call this a memo, he has probably already got it at a publisher,” which turned out to be true. I didn't know that but I knew Goodfriend well enough to know that this was the way he played. Murrow, having been burned by that Florida migrant workers thing, by trying to get BBC not to broadcast a very critical report,

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didn't want to stand in the way of anybody's freedom of expression or whatever. He wasn't about to get squeezed in another censorship flap. I don't mean to give the impression that Murrow was a weak sister; he wasn't. He was the best director we ever had and the guy who created more good feeling about the Agency and more effective work on the part of the people who worked for it than anybody I know. I am saying, these two cases where I think Ed may have bent over backwards — or this one case, anyway. Anyway, it was given to me to comment on. I proceeded to write a seventeen-page, single-spaced analysis in which I took his “report” point by point and, I think, destroyed it. Ultimately Goodfriend resigned or retired or he was sent over to Brookings or something. The guy was a totally disruptive influence, as I say, and it caused me great anguish. The only thing I could add as a “p.s.” on that is that whenever you get somebody trying to twist you around or, you know, telling lies about you in effect or distorting your position, you have to fight back. I think it pays off not only for you but for the people around you.

### TWO MORE STORIES ABOUT INDIA:

#### THE WALTER LIPPMANN AND DAVE BRUBECK VISIT

It is another form of whistle-blowing, I guess, and whistle-blowing should be countenanced at all times. Still, other things that happened in India — I mean, it was such a terrific post. I had to deal with top Americans from Walter Lippmann to Dave Brubeck. Lippmann was interesting, especially in view of what is going on today. At that time, in 1959, that Lippmann came out there I arranged for him to speak at the Delhi Press Club. China was making some threatening noises on the border that, a couple of years later turned into something very serious, but at that time there was a lot of concern in New Delhi and India about the Chinese, even though there had been an attempt to get “Hindi-Chini Bhai” — you remember that? “India and China are brothers.

Q: Yes.

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ROSENFELD: Anyway, Lippmann said that he foresaw that China would eventually become a main antagonist and that ultimately the Russians and we would be allies against the Chinese and that, while this may have racist overtones-white countries against oriental countries — he thought that it was not too farfetched to think about. Of course, that is thirty years ago and I am still not sure that this is going to happen, but it is getting a little closer if you look at things the way they are today. You never know. It is interesting only in the sense that a guy like Lippmann comes out there and creates an important feeling about America even though he himself is totally objective and totally independent. The Brubeck story is simply that I fouled. Normally, the CAO should have handled these visiting, performing artists, but he was a nice, ineffective political appointee, a friend of Milton Eisenhower's I believe, who knew nothing about jazz, so he asked me to take over, which I was delighted to do — as you know I am an old jazz piano player — and I had to go looking around for a piano for Brubeck to play. They were going to perform at the university. So I dug out a piano from one of the hotels, and got it tuned by a Sikh who was the only tuner in town. I had it lugged out to the university on a bullock cart and set up an outdoor platform. Then the Quartet came out there and they started to play and they started looking at each other. It turns out that the thing was about a half a tone off and Desmond on the saxophone couldn't tune to it. The bass player said, "It's like snapping rubber bands." So they looked at me, "How did you fix the piano?" You can't win them all.

*Q: You had been an Indian too long.*

ROSENFELD: Yes. I was playing, you know, the Ravi Shankar twist there.

*Q: You had four-and-a-half years in India on that assignment. Then you came back to IPS and took over the European Branch, correct?*

ROSENFELD: Right.

*Q: Anything of significance there?*

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ROSENFELD: What I found of interest there was that — by that time (1960) more attention was being paid at headquarters to Foreign Service people and their experience overseas.

### WHILE AT IPS — EXTRA FIELD ASSIGNMENTS — ONE BACK IN INDIA FOR TWO MONTHS DURING CHINA INVASION

I was used not only in IPS, but I was used to go out on coverage trips, remember? I would go to some conferences. I went on inspection trips. I was even rocketed out to India again to work with Ambassador Galbraith at the time that the Chinese did come down the hill.

*Q: That was a two-month assignment?*

ROSENFELD: That was about two months. I just think — I don't know if that is still being done, but it would be a good thing if they could send people out on these special assignments. The time in IPS was interesting. It did give me another touch of the bureaucracy, the Washington side of things and how the guys were really working to put the stuff out. The only problem I found was that the IPS director at that time, who had been brought in by a friend of Murrow's and had worked on Life magazine, was essentially a photo man.

*Q: Yes.*

ROSENFELD: He did not understand the job that was being done by Washington. Having been with a magazine which had bureaus all over the place and the bureaus would be sending stuff in to the magazine, he felt that the bureaus — our posts out in the field — were there to supply material for Washington. It took quite a while for him to realize that it was the other way around. Washington, I had to tell him, was in business to supply material to the posts. He resented my telling him this, and I told it to him in pretty straight language. I said it didn't work that way, and the sooner you understand it the better, because otherwise you are not going to get anything from the posts. They have too many other things to do. They are too busy. I think it might be wise if the new political appointees

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who come in were better informed about this role. But I'm sure it's now being done, it's so fundamental.

*Q: So, Gene, you had how long at IPS on that assignment?*

ROSENFELD: That was about — let's see, I got there in September 1960. I went out to East Africa in early 1963.

*Q: All right. Are you prepared to discuss East Africa now? I don't want to cut short on anything.*

ROSENFELD: Yes. The Dar es Salaam assignment.

*Q: All right. Let's say that after the IPS assignment you went back overseas to Dar es Salaam. You had had a two-month period in India.*

DURING ROSENFELD'S TWO MONTH ASSIGNMENT TO INDIA, JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH WAS AMBASSADOR. CREATED MANY DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF INTOLERANCE TOWARD HIS STAFF AND OCCASIONALLY WITH PRESS

ROSENFELD: That is right.

*Q: That was TDY.*

ROSENFELD: Yes, and that was very intense as well as important. I think it deserves a little bit of attention in that it refers to an ambassador who was not particularly helpful in dealing with his staff. This was John Kenneth Galbraith, a highly intellectual man, a great economist, although economists say he is a great journalist and journalists say he is a great economist. I think he is both. I think he writes extremely well and I think he has a very good mind. He was fun to work with, stimulating, but he had absolutely no tolerance for people that he decided he didn't like or were not doing what he wanted them to do, by his lights. I think that in his first year there he fired six counselors, embassy, just got rid

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of them, and he also got rid of a couple of USIA guys who were good officers; he just did not want to have anything more to do with them. I think this simply reflected the Kennedy attitude, the Kennedy style, which was basically that the bureaucracy — the State Department particularly they labeled a fudge factory — that they really did not understand it. They considered FSOs and bureaucrats as mealy-mouthed who always knuckled under, did not have any ideas of their own, just faceless types following a line that was set up for them and who did not have any original thoughts. Such was the Kennedy approach — in my view. I realized that Galbraith was not easy to work for, so the first thing I tried to do was to straighten him out from my point of view, which was, you know, disagree with him at the first opportunity. One thing that happened — this, again, is something that might be useful all around. At the time of this Chinese thing he would have a press briefing primarily with the American press to try to explain what was going on. At this point a very top-level USG group had come in to “assess” the India-China situation — General Paul Adam, head of Strike Command, Paul Nitze, Averell Harriman (who headed the mission). It was top government action. It was the elite and they were in there talking about how they could provide support, with the British, to stop the Chinese from coming in any further. So at one press backgrounder, which Galbraith gave almost every day, somebody said, “We hear that the Chinese are prepared to accept a cease-fire. What are you going to recommend to the Indians, that they accept it or they not accept it?” Galbraith said, “The Indians are big boys. They can make up their own minds about this.” They said, “Come on, you know this story. What is American policy? Do we want to have a cease-fire or do we want to keep just plugging in there? What is the story?” Galbraith put on a bit of a show and he started yelling at whomever it was; I think it was Phil Potter of the Baltimore Sun. He said, “Don't you cross examine me.” Then he answered some more questions and finally wound up. He and Lane Timmons, the DCM, and I got together and so he said to me, “What did you think? How did it go?” I said, “I'm sorry, I didn't like it.” Timmons said, “What do you mean? He was absolutely right to tell these guys where to get off.” I said, “No, you don't tell these guys where to get off in front of their peers. If you want to take them aside and let them have it, okay, but don't do it in front of everybody else. Don't try to put on a show. It is just

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not good for you. All it does is create more anguish."So the next day, at the group's airport departure, I see him talking to Potter and he is sort of apologizing to Potter, but I couldn't go up to him and say, "Look, the American ambassador doesn't apologize. You did what you did. You stick w it."Anyway, this is something — how you deal with an ambassador who thinks he is the smartest guy in the world is a problem every PAO is going to have. I can't give them any great advice except to be straightforward and don't knuckle under. Take your raps. If you have to get kicked out, maybe it is a good thing.

1963: PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER, DAR ES SALAAM

*Q: Okay, Gene. Do you want to turn to your African experiences?*

ROSENFELD: Let's see, now.

*Q: That would be what years that you went to Dar es Salaam?*

ROSENFELD: I went to Dar in the spring of 1963 and I stayed there for less than two years. It was not a very happy assignment for me even though it was my first as PAO and in that sense it was very important as a learning experience, even if it was a very small post. It was me, an information officer, a CAO and 5 or 6 local employees. It was a very small program, not terribly important because our policy at that time was that we were "junior partners" to the British. The British had granted the Tanganyikans independence a couple of years before and they were the ones who were considered big brother and we should just support whatever they were doing, which was not necessarily the way it ought to be, but that is the policy that had been decided upon and there we were. I don't think that the Kennedy administration wanted to get mixed up too much in East Africa at that point, but for whatever reason it was a sound policy for a small, generally untroubled Third World country we wanted to support for strategic reasons. The problem was that we didn't have a particularly good program. At least, we didn't have much money. The audience was very, very low level.

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*Q: Did you have a library?*

ROSENFELD: We had a good library, as a matter of fact. The office was two or three flights up in this building, over a grocery store. The library was rather a nice one and it was well used, with a good small staff under the watchful eye of the fabulous regional librarian, Anne Davis.

*Q: Did you have a Fulbright program?*

ROSENFELD: Yes, but small. A couple of people a year, maybe. The CAO was junior but very good, bright and hard-working. Remember, this was 1963 — the year of the March on Washington. Incidentally, the Agency put out a film called “March to Washington”, a title that was sharply criticized by a number of the American blacks who were there.

### FOURTH OF JULY INCIDENT INVOLVING CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER DAR ES SALAAM

The CAO was very capable but militant. He decided that as a black American he had to express himself because of what was going on back in Washington and in the States on the race problem. There were a few American blacks living and working at that time in Tanganyika (it became Tanzania — 1964). Because he felt that he was closer to these black expatriates than he was to the Embassy. He decided to join with them in boycotting the Ambassador's July 4th party and they were going to make it known that they were going to boycott it. This infuriated the Ambassador. He wanted to do something. He wanted to send the CAO back home. I, of course, had to intervene and had to stand up for my staff man. I argued that such a disciplinary move, even if justified, would be a basic public relations blunder. If he did this, he and all of us would be sharply criticized by host-country officials. It would be — I didn't say it in so many words — one of the stupidest things he could do, because neither the CAO nor his friends would take it quietly. It was going to be a perfect opportunity for the CAO to show how independent he was, that he

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was being kicked out by this “racist” ambassador, (which he wasn't at all), but he was just angry and he wanted to show somebody something, you know. Fortunately, it all settled down. This guy was a good officer and he rose rather rapidly in the Agency, as a matter of fact. He ended up, I think, with a senior ranking. Unfortunately, he was succeeded by another black officer who was incompetent.

*Q: What does “racist” imply? And would the appropriate action on your part be an explanation of the reason he should attend — the obvious one-discipline? Did that enter into it? Did you take this young man aside and say, “Regardless of your views on racial matters, you accept the discipline that you promised to observe when you got into the business.”*

ROSENFELD: I was less worried about the discipline than I was about continuing my program. Of course we talked it over.

*Q: Could you reason with this man on that basis?*

ROSENFELD: No, he was not going to be reasoned with. He had made up his mind.

*Q: I see.*

ROSENFELD: He was not making it up on his own. He was the only black who was an official American and there were a dozen other blacks around there working for the African American Institute or whatever — so that is what he felt he had to do, and he did it because he had a principle that he was going to uphold. I could not argue with his principle. In any case, I could not tell him “You are wrong.”

*Q: You did not make clear how this was reconciled. Did he or did he not demonstrate? Did he or did he not boycott the Ambassador's party?*

ROSENFELD: Definitely he boycotted. He did not show up at the party.

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Q: *I see.*

ROSENFELD: I don't think he made a big thing of it, but it was quite clear. ...

Q: *But he stayed on a continuous tour?*

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, he stayed on. I believe that he thought taking such a stand would help him in his job, especially in Africa. He made it clear that he was at one with his other black friends and associates in the city and he felt it was important not only because he had the best contacts among Africans but as a black American officer he had to do this. This was his way of expressing independence. The interesting part of it was that the DCM was a very liberal guy. He had been a union official. He was really in a bind. He had to play the game as a DCM but his sympathies were totally with this guy.

Q: *That is a tough one.*

ROSENFELD: It was a tough one, but it was resolved because if — I just felt that trying to be vindictive or vengeful in a situation like this gets you nowhere. Discipline is not all that important, really, if your program will be hurt by it.

Q: *You had twenty months in Dar, as you said. Then one morning you awakened to learn that you were going to go to Ethiopia, is that correct?*

ROSENFELD: That is right.

Q: *That was in what year?*

LATE 1964: TRANSFERRED TO ETHIOPIA AS PAO-ARRIVING EARLY '65

ROSENFELD: I had to go to a PAO conference in Lusaka at the end of December or early January, I guess it was, the idea being that when I came back from this conference we would pack and go on up to Ethiopia.

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*Q: This was to be a direct transfer?*

ROSENFELD: A direct transfer. As it turned out, it was requested by the ambassador up there of a Kennedy appointee whom I had known years and years before when he was a newspaperman. He had had an unhappy time with his PAO in Addis Ababa and he wanted somebody he felt that he could trust and talk to. He was not an easy guy to get along with, although he was okay with me. Anyway, whatever happened — was there anything else? So we arrived up there, as I recall, about January of 1965. The Ambassador and his wife were very welcoming. We had been friends many years before in the news business. I had seen him in 1957 in India. He was the European editor of Look magazine and I had helped him set up a big thing for — a takeout by Look magazine on an Indian wedding or something like that.

### AMBASSADOR, A KENNEDY POLITICAL APPOINTEE, ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

*Q: Let's have his name again.*

ROSENFELD: Edward M. Korry, a guy with a distinguished journalistic record. He was a political appointee of the Kennedy administration mainly of George Ball, who had been a good friend of his. Ball had brought him in and he had done some kind of job in the department before he was sent out as ambassador, but he had considerable smarts and was very articulate. His problem was that, like a lot of the Kennedy appointees, he despised State Department people in general. He wasn't too rough on USIS because he felt that there was a connection in terms of media connections, but he really was unhappy that State Department people seemed — at least in his experience — primarily concerned about promotions and whether they were going to get ahead. This translated, obviously, into a certain amount of antipathy on the part of the staff people, who felt that he was not treating them fairly. I think that they were just about as right as he was on a lot of these things.

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*Q: Gene, what was the political atmosphere at that time in which we worked in Ethiopia?*

IN MID-60S U.S. RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA WERE GOOD AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL

ROSENFELD: The political atmosphere was in general very good for us in terms of the government. We were their number one friend. They were our number one friend in Africa as far as I can remember, because we had a big communications station there that they let us have, in return for which they were getting quite a lot of arms aid from us and economic aid and commercial connections and so forth. The Ethiopians, I was convinced, deserved it. They could handle it. They were highly intelligent and had a great culture that went back three or four thousand years and of which they were very proud. Their top people, most of them — and this meant hundreds — were well educated, mostly in America, although a lot of them were educated in Britain, some in France — but they had a very skilled bureaucracy. Yet it was completely dominated by the emperor, Haile Selassie, and the system of government was an absolute monarchy — a feudal monarchy pretty much, which everybody seemed to accept — everybody, I mean, who had jobs.

BUT STUDENTS RESTIVE AND REBELLIOUS

To continue the political situation, the students were continually in a state of unrest if not rebellion. They felt that their futures were not being taken care of and their education would not be sufficiently supported, although every one of them got an allowance, a free college education and housing and so forth, but on a very low level. Nonetheless it was something that if they qualified for a college education they could get. This meant not just the Amharas, who were the dominating force.

*Q: Please spell that.*

ROSENFELD: A-m-h-a-r-a, and the basic language is Amharic. They were the ones who ruled everything. This, of course, led to a problem up in Eritrea, which to this day has

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not be settled. So as far as the political situation, generally in terms of dealing with the elite — we were in good shape. In terms of dealing with the students, we had problems, especially since the Soviets were working hard to influence and infiltrate them. Naturally, by our attempting to get close to students, to do what we could with them, to help them, this immediately put us on the bad side of the elite. It was a delicate thing and very touchy, a fairly common situation for U.S. officers in an authoritarian country. As a result, we had to tread very carefully. The Ambassador was pretty good at this. He looked forward to and eagerly sought out confrontation with students. He would go wherever they wanted him to go to talk to them about anything or argue about anything. He was an excellent debater. Not necessarily did that mean he was going to win all the arguments, but the students did respect him — and even though there was a lot of Soviet and East German and even Bulgarian maneuvering going on there, there was still a far greater interest in getting scholarships to the U.S. than there was to the Soviet Union.

*Q: How long did you spend in Ethiopia, then?*

ROSENFELD: I was there for something over two years. I left about April of 1967 because of a medical problem I had. Chris and the kids came back in June, when school finished. That brings up a factor about Foreign Service officers that I am sure the administration has to take into account. I had a strange kind of a tumor in my cheek and nobody there including the embassy doctor or private doctors or the hospitals diagnosed it as anything but some kind of an infection. It turned out to be cancer, but I managed to get back in time to get the thing fixed. It was a slow-growing cancer, but it was a problem nonetheless. I felt that somehow, somewhere there has to be a better — there has to be — I am sure it has been improved a lot since then, but there should be a very, very careful way of diagnosing and helping people with serious illness. Now, this is maybe just beating at an open door, but I think medicine now, compared to what it was in the mid 1960s, is a lot different, fortunately. Let's just say that there should be enough high-level care nearby,

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so that officers going out should not have to worry too much about illness in places like Ethiopia, where you can get all kinds of diseases and infections.

### ROSENFELDS' DEVELOPED KEEN AND ENDURING INTEREST IN ETHIOPIA

*Q: Gene, I am aware that you and your wife have developed a very keen interest in Ethiopia and one that remains to this day. Would you mind explaining how that developed?*

ROSENFELD: Well, it developed partly because it was such a sharp change from Dar es Salaam — which was very provincial and tribal — to Ethiopia, which had at least three thousand years of wonderful stories, legends, myths and history of various dynasties, various ways of governing this ancient, proud and beautiful country. So it was hard to avoid getting caught up into all that. I think the immediate reason for it was that Chris went to the university to study Ethiopian history and got hooked pretty quickly. We talked about it and this was very helpful to me, too, because as any Foreign Service officer knows, if you really want to have a positive effect in any country you have got to learn about its culture and religion and especially you have got to be able to find out a lot about its history. I don't think any person from any country feels more flattered than when you ask them about their history and how it came about and what the different things are that contributed to their position in the world at that time. Similarly, the culture was totally different from what I had ever seen. Its music, its art — and its drama — which was really not very good, the drama wasn't good — the music was pretty good. The art was not bad at all. It stemmed from a millennia of sophisticated development compared, say, to Tanzania where the only Ph.D. was Nyerere. Anyway, we sort of got hooked on it and we began to feel that there was more to this country than just another assignment. There were things that we could learn more about and maybe take away with us for future use, which is what has happened — Chris has written two or three things. She has written an excellent book on an Ethiopian empress called Empress Taytu and Menelik II, Ethiopia 1883-1910, which covers this very significant, modernizing period in recent Ethiopian history. I am also very involved in it,

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helping to finish up the second, updated, edition of a book on Ethiopian history that we did together about 10 years ago.

### IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM ON ETHIOPIAN YOUTH

One particular story I remember now is that Ethiopians speak very softly and the children, the kids, the students all speak very softly. This is part of their culture, that when they are in the presence of somebody who is older or distinguished they are very careful to put themselves in a lower position. This is true of a lot of civilizations, but this is particularly true in Ethiopia. I had not encountered it before. Certainly it was not true in India, but maybe it is in certain places. Anyway, one of our programs was handling the American Friends Service exchange thing. We would select kids every year to go to the States for a school year and they would come in and it would be almost impossible to try to find out from them — and they came from all over the country — it would be impossible for us to elicit from them because of their shyness what they wanted to do, and where they wanted to go and their new opportunities and so forth. They obviously had come out very well on the tests and on their essays and things of that sort. A year later when they came back, or ten months later when they came back, they were totally changed. They were wearing jeans and they were pretty hip. They knew what they wanted and they could express it — none of this soft talking anymore. They had become American and they loved it. Now, they were bound to come up against some pretty hard brick walls when they finally went back to their villages. They were going to have to cut back a lot, but it indicated to me the remarkable effect that those exchange programs had. This is nothing new to any of us, but here was a clear example of the developments that could occur essentially not a primitive country by any means, but a country that was certainly a Third World country and one that had a long way to go to become the power that it wanted to be.

### THE U.S. MILITARY ADVISORY GROUP PROGRAM IN ETHIOPIA

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*Q: Gene, I think you mentioned earlier that you would like to say something about MAAG in Ethiopia.*

ROSENFELD: Oh, yes. MAAG was a pretty important thing, the Military Assistance Advisory Group. This was the group that was set up there, generally headed by a major general or a brigadier general to administer the arms aid program and to carry out what they called civic action programs, building roads and schools and things of that sort — a first class, hands- on kind of a bunch. Generally they were intelligent and careful and disciplined, but every once in a while something would happen that would cause us PR problems. There was a kind of unrest, almost rebellion in Asmara, I remember, and the colonel who was up there in charge of the Asmara communications station began to get pretty panicky. He got all these military vehicles and went out and started wearing side arms and everything else, which is totally against the rule. His orders were to keep the lowest of low profiles in the town. The Ambassador was furious about it. I don't know whether he ended up getting this guy recalled but he sure chewed him out. This is the kind of thing that you can have problems with. Fortunately, I think the MAAG being a military presence in a country has to be exceedingly careful without being totally isolated. They should mix with the inhabitants of a country but they have got to be very careful. That is why selection of people to go out on these missions is — it can be helpful and it can be a damned big problem to USIS and U.S.-host country relations, in any of these places, but there is nothing new in this. It is something that we have had to live with a lot in Europe, but I think it becomes even more difficult in a less developed society, no matter how much they want our military and economic help.

*Q: Earlier, Gene, you also said that you had, among other prominent visitors, Bobby Kennedy.*

1966 BOBBY KENNEDY VISIT TO ETHIOPIA LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL

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ROSENFELD: Yes, Bobby Kennedy was not a great success in my view. This may have been because on — this was in 1966 — he was going around Africa, I think — obviously, to me, anyhow — trying to develop a certain amount of foreign policy experience because he knew he was going to run for president or at least run to be a candidate for president and he as therefore trying to establish some kind of a more global reputation on his own, rather than being in the shadow of his famous brother. He made this rather rapid tour of Africa and one of his problems was that the people around him were not all that great. The advance work may have been good in some posts, but it was no good with us because they never showed up to help out on advance planning, or to indicate who was going to go where, when this was going to happen, and how many cars do you need and so forth. The Ambassador was back in Washington, the DCM was due to leave in a week. I was the control officer on this visit. So I was a little bit nervous about how we were going to handle it, one of the problems being that I was well aware of the imperious nature of the Kennedy crowd and that if there were going to be any imperious types around it was going to be Haile Selassie and not the Kennedys. There was only going to be one emperor, but it was very difficult to tell Bobby Kennedy this. Anyway, one interesting story arises from his audience with the Emperor. I wasn't there, but as I heard it in discussing Ethiopia's problems with the Emperor, he remarked: "I understand that emperors are supposed to be descendants of the Queen of Sheba." The Emperor nodded. He asked, "Is there any validity in that, any truth in that?" The Emperor froze and the audience finished rather rapidly after that. It was one of the great gaffes of all time in Ethiopia, as far as I know. Because he had no real knowledge of Ethiopian history, he had, in effect, questioned the Emperor's dynastic credentials. I assume Bobby must have recognized that he had pulled a rock on this one, so the rest of the visit was a little bit tense. He was supposed to talk to some students at the university. He wanted to do it at 11 o'clock and I tried to get the university to do it at that time, but of course the head of the university, worried about student unrest and fearing a large, unruly crowd, conveniently took a walk. Finally I managed to get the thing set for 4:30, but Bobby was furious. He wanted to do it at his time. I said, "I'm sorry. You are going to have to realize, this is their place, this is their

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school, their university, and they don't like these students getting organized. There is enough unrest among the students already and for you to give an inspirational speech doesn't fit in with their particular plans of dampening things down, so I think we are going to have to play it their way." He chewed me out for it. I said, "I'm sorry about that, but that is the way it goes. You are going to have to do it their way. It is going to be at 4:30 this afternoon. So we will get everything all set up for that, including microphones and the whole business." So he did show up, made his speech and it was good. He had a set speech that went over well, but there weren't nearly as many students around. The university officials had seen to that, but that is the way they had to play things. They were very security conscious there, as subsequent events turned out. I wanted to get him interviewed by one of the guys with the Voice of the Gospel, which was a radio station that could be heard all over Africa. It was a great outlet run by the American Lutherans. The reporter actually was Dave Williams who later came back to head VOA's Africa Service. Kennedy didn't want to. He said, "You're running me ragged." I said, "Okay, if you don't want to do it you don't have to do it. Just tell me you don't want it and I will call them off. One of your guys said it would be okay." Ultimately he did it because he couldn't resist being interviewed in that kind of situation. To top it all off, he made his tour-ending speech to a full assembly of the OAU, but the power failed right in the middle of it! My whole point is that some celebrities or luminaries are decent people and easy to get along with and they take your advice about things that you know more about than they do. Others are not so easy.

*Q: Well, Gene, after Ethiopia your next assignment was what?*

1967: BACK TO WASHINGTON FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT, THEN REASSIGNMENT

ROSENFELD: I had to come back because of this thing in my jaw and to get treated for what turned out to be cancer. When I got back I was immediately given the fullest attention at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center and the State Department doctors and personnel at the Agency were simply tops on this whole thing. There was not a thing I could think of

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that I needed that I did not get. I just was totally impressed by their ability to take care of the problem. It meant that I was out of action for a good five or six months, but I was given every consideration and every attention, so that when the time came that I felt that I had sufficiently convalesced and I wanted to go back, by that time I had already been assigned to Saigon.

### LATE 1968, SAIGON: CHIEF OF THE MISSION PRESS CENTER

I had talked to Ambassador Bunker, who had not gone out there yet. I had talked to Harold Kaplan, who had just come back. This was before I went into treatment. Bunker said, "You had better get that thing taken care of before you can even think about going out there," which is, of course, what happened. Meantime, I was temporarily assigned to IPS, in with Nat Glick, to get out the first issue of Dialogue magazine. I had edited and produced a similar intellectual quarterly in India when I was there. Nat had been working on Dialogue for about two years, so following orders from Tom Cannon, IPS' Number two, I nudged Glick and we managed to get it out fairly quickly, before I left for Saigon. We had some problems with the art department and with some other things, but it was a successful effort. Once that was out of the way and I felt sufficiently well, I went off to Saigon.

*Q: What was your assignment there?*

ROSENFELD: I was to become Chief of the Mission Press Center. Barry Zorthian was the head of that whole operation at that time but was clearly about to phase out, because he had been there something like four years, I believe. So the decision was made that I should handle the Mission Press Center and Ed Nickel would take over the JUSPAO operation, which was for the in-country program. The Mission Press Center had to deal with mainly foreign correspondents, although there was obviously some connection with the Vietnamese press which was not really a significant media operation at that time, but nonetheless it had to be paid attention to, even though it was largely government controlled. We arrived, I think, two days after Tet 1968, of ill fame, and it sort of went

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downhill from there. It was not too long an assignment. I was there for about eight or nine months. It was not a happy one. Zorthian was phasing out, supposedly in perhaps two or three months and as we were housemates I quickly got to know an awful lot of the press people, TV and so forth, but the overall situation became increasingly bad. I think it hit its nadir when we all sat around my office waiting to hear the broadcast of President Johnson's speech, around the end of March, where he indicated that he was not going to run again for the presidency. Some people thought it was a good idea and some didn't. I was unhappy about it, not just from the psychological viewpoint, but it was one of the things that you had to live with and it intensified a very difficult and unhappy situation. There were a lot of very good USIS people there, even though they came out for different reasons. Looking back on it now, maybe it wasn't as bad as I felt then, but at that time my reaction was that people volunteered to go to Vietnam because they figured if they didn't volunteer they were going to get sent anyway. You had to have it on your record and it was good to have on your record because it would lead presumably to promotion. I think that was one of the first reasons people went out there. The second reason is that you got these special allowances and perks and things where you could go back every three or four months and where your family could be set up in Bangkok or in New Delhi or in the Philippines or whatever. The third reason was that maybe you were having trouble at home with your wife and it was a good way to get away and not to worry about it since dependents couldn't come to Vietnam. The fourth reason was that you really believed in what the U.S. was trying to do there. I am not trying to be a hero about this. I did believe and I did feel that USIA, our people had to participate, had to provide their skills and do their share. And as former newsmen you wanted in on the top story of the decade. I did what I could. It was not a wildly successful effort on my part. I can remember one particular story, however, which I think may have had a little bit of effect on history. The Mission Council was the top brass. It consisted of Ambassadors Bunker and Berger — Sam Berger was the deputy ambassador — Bill Colby was CIA station chief. General Westmoreland was the chief of the military assistance thing. Chester Cooper, I think, was the economics guy then. Don McDonald was the AID chief. Ed Nickel was on the Council

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where Barry had been from the beginning of his tour, I believe. Barry was away, so I sat in for him at this one particular session.

### ROSENTHAL SUGGESTS A DIFFERENT WAY OF HANDLING PRESS FOR ANTICIPATED "SECOND TET," WESTMORELAND FIRST OBJECTS, THEN AGREES

I sat in on maybe two or three MC meetings altogether. I felt this was a piece of history going on there and it was worthwhile remembering. This was around the middle of April, 1968. Tet, as we know, was a very important turning point. This particular meeting climaxed with a report by General Westmoreland who was a brilliant briefer. This was the key group, the inside inside, in the inner sanctum when we had these meetings, protected in every possible way. The walls were covered with maps and charts of different battle areas. Westmoreland got up to give his briefing — it took him about twenty minutes to a half hour — about what was going to happen. The intelligence that they had was that there was going to be an attack by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong around the first of May and they were going to hit not the hundred-and-twenty-eight places that they hit at Tet but the, oh, maybe about five or ten key areas as another unexpected major assault. MACV had the full intelligence on NVA attack plans. The general did not say how his people had obtained it. It was generally known that they had captured a Colonel Dac and that he had given them a lot of information about this forthcoming attack and they were basing a lot of their planning, defense and counter-attack planning on this. At the end of Westmoreland's briefing he said, "This is the way it is going to be and I don't want this to go one inch outside of this room. This is totally top secret at all times. Nobody is to know anything about this at all. You have got to hold this extremely tight." Everybody nodded except me. I said (cautiously), "Well, it seems to me that, since while we may have had a military victory at Tet we suffered a very severe psychological defeat because people did not expect it and people did not think that they had this kind of strength. Therefore, I think it might be a good idea, that we give the press a briefing — within limits — about what was going to happen and bind them on it that they could not file anything until the action started." I was convinced that the press, while not totally reliable, was reliable enough so

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that if we threatened them with expulsion if they broke the confidence rule, they would play along. Everybody around the room sort of looked at me aghast. Westmoreland turned to me and said, "Oh, I thought of that but I rejected it." I said, "Okay. I just think that it is a possibility that we might be able to do something to get a psychological edge at this stage of the game." End of meeting. About three or four days later I got a call from General Sidle, who was Westmoreland's chief PR man, a wonderful guy, very good, who said, "Gene, why don't you get some of the guys together — you know, five or six, you know the right guys, guys that we can trust." I said, "What's up?" He said, "I can't tell you anything." I said, "Well, okay, when do you want to do it? Three o'clock? Three o'clock Wednesday, right?" He said, "That's fine." So at three o'clock Wednesday some 35 guys I had asked to come to the meeting with Sidle were in the briefing room. Sidle was astounded when he saw this mob. He said, "What the hell are you doing?" I said, "I'm not sure what you plan to tell them, but it is a briefing, and if you are just going to tell five or six guys the others are going to get sore as hell, so you are going to have to bring them in on this thing one way or another. You might as well do it in one shot." I had a pretty good idea of what he was going to talk about — the upcoming "mini-Tet." His sanitized version of the Westmoreland briefing to the Mission Council was a first-class job on a very tight off-the-record, hold-for-release basis and nobody broke it. Everybody was aware of what was supposed to be happening. It turned out to occur almost exactly the way he had predicted and we scored quite a few points. It didn't change the course of the war but it was, in my view at least, a turn-around from a public relations standpoint, which is what I was there for and which is what JUSPAO and USIS were there for. When it came time to leave, I said my goodbyes to Ambassador Bunker. I took the opportunity to ask him if he had had anything to do with General Westmoreland's mind-change about the mini-Tet briefing. Bunker looked sort of blank at that but when I refreshed his memory he said, "Oh, yes, I remember now. Yes, I urged Westy to do it." Frankly, I didn't believe him. Although Bunker was a man of towering integrity, I preferred to give Westmoreland the credit for having the good sense to follow my sterling advice!

LATE 1968: BACK TO WASHINGTON: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

*Q: Okay, Gene. Do you want to lock up Vietnam now and go on to your next assignment?*

ROSENFELD: I think so. I think there is nothing about Vietnam I can add that anyone does not know.

*Q: What was your next assignment?*

ROSENFELD: For my next assignment I came back to Washington and became Assistant Director for Public Information. Frank Shakespeare hadn't come in yet as director and Leonard Marks was still director, but Nixon was about to be elected and Frank had had a lot to do with Nixon's election. He was named to be the director of the Agency. I was in the job and he was willing enough to let me stay there for the time being, although I knew that (being as political a person as he was) my chances of staying on in the job weren't all that great.

SHAKESPEARE AT START OF HIS DIRECTORSHIP WISHED TO CUT OFF RELATIONS WITH NEW YORK TIMES-BUT CHANGES HIS MIND

Nonetheless, I did what I could to assist him. I remember one of the first things that occurred between us was that he called me in and said, "You have got a pretty good reputation around here. But I want to let you know one thing, that I don't want to have anything to do with the New York Times. I do not want to talk to them. I do not want to have anything to do with them." I said, "I am sorry. If that is the way you are going to play it you are going to be in trouble. You just can't do it." "You can't do it for two reasons. One of them is that the New York Times is still the New York Times, and if you are going to turn them down your own personal position in this is going to be pretty bad. The second reason, probably more important, is that President Nixon has declared this is going to be an open administration. Cutting out the New York Times is hardly being an open administration. He

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said, "Oh, well, okay." So we went on from there. I think that he appreciated the fact that I was candid and straightforward with him. Our relationship was very good. We did a number of things that were, I thought, pretty useful, but it was sort of an in-between job and I was prepared to wait it out, do what I could.

### BRUCE HERSCHENSOHN GIVES PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE TROUBLE

I had my problems with Bruce Herschensohn who rarely, if ever, told the truth, as far as I was concerned. He would go out making speeches and show his Agency films to public groups, which was against the Congressional regulations.

*Q: Identify him, please.*

ROSENFELD: Bruce Herschensohn succeeded George Stevens as head of the Films TV Division. He had earlier done a very good film about Kennedy called "Years of Lightning, Day of Drums." Was that it?

*Q: Yes.*

ROSENFELD: He was, you know, inordinately right wing. He was way over. As a matter of fact, he is out in California now as a right wing commentator and is further right than Jesse Helms. One of the public relations things I was responsible for was sort of to keep a rein on the personnel of the Agency who had a tendency to go off base. Bruce was certainly one of them. There was another guy who had come back from Vietnam and had written a book about Vietnam, which was very critical of various actions and programs. I talked to him about it and he agreed to hold off. I said, "Look, you have got a good future in this Agency. If you want to go ahead and publish this, go ahead, but I cannot vouch for the fact that people are not going to be unhappy about it. So think about it, but don't say I didn't warn you." He came back to me and said, "Okay, I will just rewrite it. I will hang onto it." I said, "Maybe someday you will want to publish it, but in the meantime, hold your fire."

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*Q: Was the book ever published?*

ROSENFELD: No.

*Q: It was never published, okay.*

ROSENFELD: No, because I really went through the whole thing with him — this is part of the job of public information. I had AID, CIA, the Defense Department, I had the State Department, everybody concerned, look at the manuscript and they all came back with lots of corrections or rejections. So he accepted that.

*Q: You were in this job for how long?*

ROSENFELD: It was almost two years, maybe a little more than two years.

*Q: Is there anything more you want to include in that period?*

ROSENFELD: Well, I can't think of anything offhand. Maybe something will occur to me later. Maybe when we go through the tape I will be able to think of something.

1970: PRESS ATTACH#: LONDON — LAST ASSIGNMENT BEFORE RETIREMENT

*Q: What was your next job, then?*

ROSENFELD: I was assigned to London as press attach# and I, of course, was delighted. The time was coming — I was, oh, fifty-five at the time, which meant I had another five years. At that time there was the mandatory retirement age of sixty, so I figured if I got sent to London I would spend the rest of my time in the Agency in London as press attach# — press counsel or whatever the job would turn out to be. So for my last five years I had this perfect wind-up in a great city, super media activities, which is what I was there for, centered in London, in a highly civilized country with great cultural opportunities, an excellent USIS staff, an almost completely amenable group of colleagues all the way

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around. I was delighted to fall into this assignment after having served only in relatively hardship posts like India, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Saigon, with occasional forays to Peru, Liberia and Nepal for inspections or special assignments or whatever.

### BRITISH AND PRESS DID NOT LIKE AMBASSADOR ANNENBERG

The fact that I had total empathy for my host country, its history, culture and people, didn't blind me to the realization that British intellectuals, including some media types, looked down their noses at Americans in general and the embassy people, especially USIS, in particular. Add to that their disdain for Ambassador Annenberg because he was extremely rich, a Nixon lover, inarticulate and far from an intellectual. He may have been all these things, but not in a negative way so far as I was concerned. I knew of his drawbacks but I learned that he had plenty on his side, so it made for, as they say, a very "challenging" job to do, to try to turn the media around in his favor. American correspondents were not all that favorable to him, either. As a matter of fact, I talked to one of them recently. I said, "What did you think of Annenberg? How do the American correspondents feel about him?" He said, "Contempt." I said, "Come on, now, that is a little heavy." He said, "No, no." I said, "But they got to like him after a while?" He said, "Yeah, yeah, oh it got to be better."

### ANNENBERG UNCOMFORTABLE WITH PRESS:

#### RELUCTANT TO MEET WITH THEM

Anyway, so I tried after casing the situation for a couple of months — he was already in place when I got there, so I replaced a long-time press attach#. So I tried to use the Bunker system with him — you know, getting together with the press every week, but he wouldn't go for that at all. I knew why — he had a rather bad stammer and therefore couldn't express himself easily, or confidently, not at ease in handling a tough group of newsmen. He was very much afraid of saying something that might get the embassy or

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Nixon in a flap. He really disliked newsmen, since he used to be able, as a publisher, to hire and fire them whenever he felt like it.

### ANNENBERG'S SUCCESSFUL LUNCHEON FOR PRESS CHANGED ATTITUDE TOWARD HIM FOR THE BETTER

Eventually he agreed to give a luncheon for the American Correspondents' Association at the embassy residence, Winfield House. I suggested that we all meet for drinks in the reception areas, where his wonderful collection of French Impressionists, worth maybe \$15 or \$20 million at least, would be on view and, I added, where he could tell them about his favorite paintings — their provenance, how he got them and such. This would have laid to rest the gossip that he did not know one picture from another, that he was just a rich collector. I knew differently and that this would be a strong point, because I had been at the residence a number of times and he had taken me around and pointed to this picture and that one, the situation of it, when the artist had painted it and all the rest of it. He knew what the stuff was.

Q: Yes.

ROSENFELD: But he vetoed that approach, even though he agreed to the luncheon. He wanted the pre-lunch drinks to be held up in his study, a beautifully appointed area where, he said, “they can see all those wonderful books I have.” So that is the way it went — a fine informal ice-breaking up in the study and then a marvelous lunch by his incomparable kitchen staff, served impeccably with wines I haven't tasted since, and then some easy back-and-forth at the table over the dessert with him (at my suggestion) asking them questions and a final look-around at the paintings. The result was positive beyond my best expectations. The ambassador realized that the newsmen were not out to scalp him and were rather civilized people on their own and they got a different, very pleasing and positive contact with him. He really handled himself very well since he knew he didn't have to get up and make any speeches or answer any questions, or even, if he

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did, as I told him, everything was going to be off the record and there wouldn't be any problem or anything like that. It just was cool. There were a lot of questions and he handled everything, on a personal basis. Since he knew a lot about business and he had great contacts with the top business people in London, he was able to talk about that. This was an expertise they did not realize that he had. Anyway, within a few weeks, actually, they gave him a luncheon as the honored guest, with more of the same easy conversation. I made it clear that there would not be any speeches at this luncheon, which he would refuse to do because he knew he was a lousy speaker. So everything went off very well again and the attitude toward Annenberg had sort of turned around—not completely, but pretty decently. How to do it with the Brits — Annenberg never forgave them for the way they had covered his presentation of his credentials to the Queen — you remember when she asked him, “How are things at the residence?” He said, “Well, we are in the process of refurbishment.” Everybody made fun of that. He said it because of his stammer. He had to choose words that he wouldn't fumble, but nobody knew that and so he had to use his own tricks and mechanisms. Now, that happened — that refurbishment thing happened before my time, fortunately. So he decided, in terms of his relations with the British media and public, to do it his way: first with tasteful, quiet, unpublicized donations to important public charities and by his close association with a number of top publishers like Lord Harmsworth, Lord Astor and such. By the time he left in November of 1974 he was hailed as a friend of Britain, a gentleman if not a scholar, and a self-effacing philanthropist who had done more than most people realized. In keeping with the sensationalist approach of the British press, which everybody knows about — it is even worse now with Murdoch in charge of some of it — the papers, much less so for TV, were running about three anti-CIA stories a week. This was coupled with routine but regular coverage of anti-Vietnam protests at the embassy. I was one of relatively few embassy people who had been to Saigon at the time, so I was tapped with maybe one or two other guys to receive protest delegations. I doubt whether these audiences had any positive effect in either the short or long run, but it at least gave these people and those they represented the feeling that they had really told us off and thus had vented some of their steam, at least for the time being. I

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remember one group that was really weird. This one guy really swished with a long nun's habit, with a white band across his forehead, a long black cape; his companion called him "sister." They were among the questioners, and there was one young fellow who really turned around whatever I had said. I asked, "Do you go to a Jesuit school?" He got pale, because he knew that his position he gave on Vietnam was not going to go down too well at the church. He said, "How did you know I was a Jebbie?" I said, "By the way you argue." I laughed and said: "You are a good arguer." Anyway, that sort of softened them up a bit. We had — I must have seen half a dozen of these groups and they were intense, very eager, very devoted to letting me have it.

*Q: Anything else on London, Gene?*

### ANTI-CIA HABITS OF BRITISH MEDIA

ROSENFELD: Well, yes. I mentioned earlier about the anti-CIA stuff. This one other case involved the CIA. Even the Times, the exalted, great Times had descended to front paging a phony story about what they said was CIA interference in the British elections in some northern constituencies. The CIA invariably refuses to comment on such allegations, but I felt this was sufficiently serious—you know, interference in an election, an absolute no-no — that we had to knock this one down, at least rebut it. So I talked to the station chief about it to get McLean to issue a strong denial. I had known this station chief before and he agreed with me. He said, "Okay, let's get a denial." I drafted a very tough paragraph, very strongly worded, objecting to everything, that this was totally false and absolutely no basis in fact whatever, you know. He went back to McLean and in twenty minutes it came back okayed, with no changes.

*Q: Well.*

ROSENFELD: So I was learning that when you need it you can do it. So don't hesitate. Now, the aftermath was — you never win these things, you know. A special call was made to Louie Heren, who was acting editor at the Times at that time. I had

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known Louie in India, where he was a Times correspondent. He was sort of embarrassed because he didn't really know what the story we were denying was all about. He admitted that it had been put in the paper after he went home and he hadn't seen it.

*Q: We are talking about the London Times, of course?*

ROSENFELD: Yes, of course. He said he would check into it and that it had apparently been printed after he had left the office, but we all knew that both the printers' union and the journalists' guild were communist-dominated at that time, so it was quite possible that the story had been inserted without Louie's knowledge. This, however, did not prevent him from writing a piece the following day with a sort of clarification, but noting that the embassy had issued "its usual denial."

*Q: I see.*

ROSENFELD: Completely disregarding the fact that the CIA almost never confirms or denies an allegation of CIA involvement. So you do the best you can, but that is no guarantee you will get the results you want, but you still have to make the effort. To my recollection there was something of a drop-off in the anti-CIA stuff after that.

*Q: Now, London, obviously in the five years you were there, or close, there were some anecdotes worth telling-I leave it to you. Do you want to continue with that or do you want to wrap it up?*

### WRAP-UP: ANECDOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

ROSENFELD: I have a couple of stories that are sort of interesting. I don't know if they have a moral-I mean, if they have a relevance today, not a moral.

### A. ANECDOTE I: "TURF STRUGGLE" REVOLVING AROUND YEHUDI MENUHIN

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This is sort of a turf thing. It occurred in connection with Yehudi Menuhin, the violinist. We had received from some music school in the midwest a tribute to him from young violin pupils who were using a method he had been sponsoring. For some reason it was turned over to me. I called him to tell him about it and he was delighted, so I said that maybe we could fix up some kind of a presentation at the embassy, but I would have to work it out and get back to him. He said it was a lovely idea and we chatted a bit about how the first time I saw him was at his twelfth birthday concert at Carnegie Hall, to which my aunt had taken me for a Bar Mitzvah present, and we both chuckled, since his parents were born in Israel. He was born in San Francisco. Next, I went to the CAO with the idea. He thought it would be ridiculous, since Menuhin was a "has-been". I was astounded but left it in the hands of the PAO to decide. Nothing was ever done, except that two weeks later Menuhin gave a concert to a standing room only audience at the Albert Hall which got the expected rave notices. I couldn't resist putting a clipping of the Times review on the CAO's desk. The moral of this story: don't try to invade another guy's turf, no matter how brilliant the idea is, especially when the invaded officer is a jerk.

*Q: Okay. What else?*

### B. ANECDOTE II: REGARDING ELLA FITZGERALD

ROSENFELD: Another name-dropping item. I heard that Ella Fitzgerald was in on a concert tour and I mentioned it to Annenberg because I knew he was having a party and it might be a good idea to invite her as a distinguished American artist. He said, "Great. See if you can get her." I tracked her down to a hotel in Brighton, where she was due to give a concert, and finally got her on the phone. I explained the situation and she was pleased but not all that excited and suggested that I talk to her manager, since he had the schedule and so forth. I wanted to continue the conversation, but she cut me off rather delicately, saying, "I would like to chat but I just got out of the shower and I am standing here naked,

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so I've got to go."Moral — even if you get turned down, it is worth the effort, so you can tell the story for some oral history or other!

*Q: Have we covered the main points?*

### C. OBSERVATION I: USIA NEEDS REVAMPING-ESPECIALLY IN ITS RECRUITMENT

ROSENFELD: Well, let's see. I have a number of — let's see. For instance, I just wonder what is going to happen to USIA — I do not know whether this has any relevance. It does have some, I expect — in the face of budget cuts and everything else. I think USIA is going to have to need some revamping. It is more important than ever because the U.S. image is abrading depressingly lower, or was, as we learned from Mr. Gelb's talk with Chancellor Kohl. He did not put it in exactly those terms, but you are going to have to figure out how to counter this and I think in the face of cut-backs — and it seems to me there are going to have to be some cut-backs — don't you think so?

*Q: Well, I am out of touch, Gene. I really don't know, although with what you all said the other day, yes, it is a very serious budget problem.*

ROSENFELD: I think what I am leading up to is that our recruiting, if we have any now, is going to have to be very, very careful. I have been a little bit concerned and I have gotten this from some of the other guys at the Alumni Association, that they feel that we are not getting people like we used to get, people with good newspaper experience, people who have the ability and political savvy and so forth. We are getting a lot of MAs and Ph.D.'s, but we are not really getting people with much public affairs experience. I think that is where our recruiting problems may have to be. This is not for me to help on, because I think it is one that the Agency is probably well aware of.

*Q: People listening to this tape ten years from now are going to say, "My God, they had personnel problems then, too? They had budget problems then, too?" I don't recall a time when we didn't.*

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ROSENFELD: Also, what about this constant call — I don't know about how often or frequent — that USIA should be reintegrated with State?

*Q: I don't know how active that is on the Hill. I have the impression that at least one senior staff member is all for that. I think that Senator Pell, I have heard, is for that, but it seems to get a little momentum over the years and then peter out.*

### D. OBSERVATION II: TOP AGENCY OFFICERS SHOULD NOT HANKER FOR AMBASSADORSHIPS

ROSENFELD: I would — I am very much a devotee, you know, a real loyalist in terms of the Agency. I think the more independent we are the better we are. I think this is — a lot of people aren't going to agree with this — I think one way to show our independence is not to — I don't know if you can do anything about it — but to sort of slide away from the idea that USIA officers can become ambassadors. I don't like that. I think being an important guy in USIA is important enough and you don't have to be an ambassador. Even though you may be thoroughly qualified for it, I just think that a career is a career. Stick to USIA, do your best there, and that is it. Now, a lot of people are going to say, "That's nonsense. I always wanted to become an ambassador. My wife wants me to become an ambassador."

*Q: This is an important thing. I share your feeling on it, but I don't think it is realistic in that I think if a person has the right background, the right language, the right connections on the Hill he is going to get the job.*

ROSENFELD: Can I point out — I won't name names, but I would point out that there have been, I would say, at least half a dozen — I mean, sure, there were crackerjack guys like Bill Weathersby, Art Hummel, Bev Carter, and there are probably some others, too, but I think that there have been four or five that didn't quite measure up.

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*Q: All right. We are just about at the tail end here, so let's wrap it up. One more thing, important, I think, about locals.*

E. OBSERVATION III: IN RECRUITING AND DEALING WITH FOREIGN NATIONAL EMPLOYEES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID ACTIONS THAT CAN CAUSE FRICTIONS AMONG REGIONAL, TRIBAL, CASTE, ETC GROUPS

You know, an administrative personnel situation-and this is in terms of employing locals or nationals or whatever you want to call them — that I learned to be aware of from India and Ethiopia and probably most other places, especially in the Third World, without being too patronizing about it, was the friction that could arise between different and possibly antagonistic regional tribal, religious and other ethnic groupings among your embassy employees. Did you ever encounter that?

*Q: Indonesia was one.*

ROSENFELD: I mean, this is a problem that everybody should be — as far as I know it has never been briefed on, but you may have to face. The tendency is for those locals in a position of some authority to try to get jobs or contracts for members of their own community, a form of nepotism not unknown in most of the world, including here. Americans, I have found, tend to forget about such livelihood factors. It can be terribly important in developing countries. In India, for example, South Indians were always on the lookout to introduce their cousins or village friends, and the same with the Anglo-Indians. Both of these groups were usually well educated and skillful. Similarly, caste cousins, for instance, from the Agarwal subcaste were particularly good as bookkeepers or accountants for budget work, so hiring someone with such capability might seem a good thing from an administrative standpoint but it may very well cause resentment among other ethnics. India was and may still be a problem in this personnel recruiting area because of the many different language and regional divisions. Fortunately, most are Hindus, so the overall religious factor does not seem to be a difficulty, but the existence

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of the different castes despite official policy aimed at eliminating communal conflicts and differences—the Muslim factor adds another possible inflammatory dimension — can still cause problems that need very close watching. In Ethiopia the Amharas are the dominant tribe and language, but the Eritreans were often better educated and skilled in many intellectual areas, so it was important to try to keep a balance or at least redress it when possible. After all, an incoming PAO, is not only confronted with an established roster of people extremely eager to keep their jobs, but he or she wants to be as forthcoming and friendly and pro-host country as a means of showing how understanding, nonracist and democratic Americans are. I do not mean to go overboard about this, but it is often a problem that one may never learn about until it erupts into a situation that may need some skillful diplomacy and management to smooth over. Even in Saigon, the regroupées — those were the North Vietnamese who came south — felt superior to the southerners, both because they were tougher, more devoutly Catholic and more anticommunist — you know about that. Now, another thing — and I will finish up on the local employees thing. This is something that should be done if it isn't in most posts, if it can be. One very useful thing that was established during my tour in Delhi, although I had little or nothing to do with it, was an employees' credit union, an association of employees. As I recall, this was the initiative of John Lund, Deputy PAO, who for all his occasionally overbearing manner really had a feeling for dealing with the local employees. He worked with them to organize an Indian employees' association, with officers and by-laws, with the aim of having some kind of financial set-up that had membership, dues and could make loans to needy members for approved purposes. Setting up the credit union needed some help from knowledgeable embassy officers, as well, although my recollection is that this credit union was restricted to USIS workers. It was not only a businesslike success but a social one, as well. It provided a meeting place for get-togethers and enabled ordinarily insulated or caste-conscious nationals to mix informally and democratically and with Americans. It is still going on. I just checked on it and the thing is still one of the great successes.

*Q: Wonderful.*

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ROSENFELD: I think that is something that people should be aware of when they go out on an assignment. If that thing does not exist and it could exist, they ought to move to it.

*Q: A good point.*

ROSENFELD: A final footnote: on the role of wives, single women and bachelors. This has quite a different dimension in the 50s and 60s from what it is now, I believe. Like a typical old codger, I think the old system was better even though there isn't a chance that the "equality" system can be changed. For self-protection (at home, mainly!) let me declare myself in favor of the ERA! Now, as I understand it, the wife has no bureaucratic responsibilities except as she wants to pursue them. In other words, she no longer has to show up when the Ambassador's madam calls a meeting of the wives so they can sit around and knit scrubbies or bake a batch of brownies for the upcoming church bazaar or whatever, and that's a good thing. I think if wives want to tell madam to go stuff it, they should be able to do so with impunity, as long as it's done tactfully. However, and here's where I expect to encounter a tidal wave of opposition, I think wives should definitely expect to help out wherever possible (without compensation) on representational activities and even in the office when an important visitor or cultural performance is upcoming. And there should be some way of giving the officer spouse credit for such spousal activity. My memory may be failing, but my recollection is that officer evaluations used to have some reference to how the spouse performed, but that is now forbidden, along with other points about health, etc. On the business of awarding credit points, this may be objectionable to unmarried officers who may claim that they don't have such an extra team member helping them toward promotion. Put it under the heading of family values, but I favor extra points for a married officer, with children, if his/her spouse is doing good work for the cause. By the same or similar token, if Mrs. or Mr. Spouse decides he/she would rather bridge or tennis instead of helping out when a Congressional group shows up, they shouldn't be penalized, but the officer just won't get those extra points. It would be sort of spicy to get into the usefulness of single officers advancing the cause by some bedtime activity with

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well-placed members of the elite (government, media, academe, et.al.) especially with members of the opposite sex, although local customs may not frown on other excitements!

End of interview